

## Made in Maine Condiments

# Sweet, Sassy And Savory ~ Three Small-Batch Culinary Delights

by Valerie Marier

Few words whet the appetite more than "fresh", "natural" and "made in Maine." They are also the essence of three small-batch home-grown businesses in York County that are enjoying record sales in shops and farmers' markets in Maine and beyond.

One is sweet, one is sassy, one is savory, and each takes the journey from farm to table with delicious ease.

### Above the Dam Jam

Sue Sydnor made jam as a little girl to sell at her family's farm stand near Dayton, Maine.

When she moved back to Dayton from New Hampshire in 2008, after retiring from a busy career in education to raise three small children, her brother encouraged her to make jam again for the still-thriving family stand.

Today, Above the Dam Jam sells in 70 shops from Maine to Massachusetts, including area farmers' markets, Kennebunk's Boulangerie bakery and the upscale Savoner's Market in Boston.

This past January her Raspberry-Chocolate Jam was lauded in "Source," the food section of the *Portland Press Herald*.

"Our most popular jams are strawberry rhubarb and peach habanero," Sydnor says, "but our homemade peanut butter with honey and sea salt isn't far behind."

Sydnor is a one-woman operation; she admits to focusing on "product, packaging and personality – all from Maine."

Operating out of a commercial kitchen built as an addition to her home, she cooks year-round and even creates her own labels.



Kennebunkport Sauce Co.'s Coastal Collection features Maine blueberries.

She says, "My label shows three kids sitting in a canoe on a river – and that's truth in advertising because we live above the Skelton Dam on the Saco River."

### Kennebunkport Sauce Co.

Before he started the Kennebunkport Sauce Co., K.C. Gordon was a trained zoologist working in zoos across the country.

When he moved to Maine 14 years ago, and then married (his wife is Tina Hewett Gordon, the general manager of the Nonantum Resort), his lifelong passion for grilling inspired him to "create sauces with a local flavor – particularly Maine blueberries because they are both delicious and nutritionally good for you."

In 2011 he became licensed to cook at his home. He bought a four-quart kettle and began buying frozen blueberries from Wyman's of Maine.

Today he has graduated to a 60-quart pot, his sales have skyrocketed from 70 cases to nearly 500 annually, and he's just introduced a new line called the Coastal Collection, which features a

blueberry-infused seafood cocktail sauce.

"I have no doubt we'll have 20 new products within the next few years," Gordon says.

The first shop locally to feature Gordon's sauces was the Flaming Gourmet in Kennebunkport's Dock Square. Today he is proud to be in Zeb's General Store in North Conway, New Hampshire, along with the Trading Post in Kittery and Shields Meats in Kennebunk, among others.

Top sellers include the Wild Maine Blueberry Chipotle BBQ Sauce and Wild Maine Blueberry Hot Sauce, all gluten free.

Gordon says, "It's really fun and rewarding to make products that are tasty and so well-received."

### Lakonia Greek Products

Lakonia Greek Products bottles "the freshest and most natural olive oil" on

the market, says Melissa Rioux who, with her mother Daphne, manages this Saco-based family business.

"Our products feature the true flavor and health benefits of a Mediterranean diet that you can get right here in Maine," she says.

This small-batch-but-rapidly-growing company imports oils, olives, wild oregano and mountain tea leaves from family-owned groves in the Lakonia region of Greece, which lies at the southeast end of the Peloponnese peninsula.

The products are then infused, bottled, packaged and sold at local farmers' markets and stores throughout Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Vermont.

Recently Lakonia garnered "Best Foods" awards at juried craft shows in Pittsburgh and Orlando.

"This is truly farm to table," says Rioux, who speaks passionately about the freshness and nutritional goodness of Lakonia oils and olives.

"Since we started selling in 2006, our family has been involved in every step of the process, including having our own driver pick up the oil and other products when they arrive by ship at a dock in Brooklyn."

Their newest product line includes a lemon-infused olive oil, oak-barrel-aged wine vinegar and balsamic vinegar with fresh garlic.

Rioux says, "These infusions are low in sodium, rich in flavor, delicious on salads and vegetables, and

excellent as marinades for bread dipping."

Customers who buy Lakonia products at the York or Saco farmers markets enjoy an additional bonus.

Rioux says, "When you need more, just stop by our Saco warehouse Monday through Friday, 9 to 5, ring the doorbell and get your refill."

For more information about these products and where to buy them, contact: Above the Dam Jam, Dayton: info@abovethedam.com; Kennebunkport Sauce Co., Kennebunkport: 207-216-3140; Lakonia Greek Products, Saco: 207-282-4002 or info@lakoniagreekproducts.com.



Lakonia products feature the true flavor and health benefits of a Mediterranean diet.



Sue Sydnor displays her Above the Dam Jam flavors.

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